

Christmas story at Chapel

The Christmas story in lessons and carols is presented by the Chapel, Dec. 14, at the 10:30 a.m. Protestant service.

The story recounts the Christian narrative of the birth of Jesus Christ through songs and scripture readings.

Holiday concerts kick off today

Beginning today, music will liven up the lobby of the Veterans Affairs Medical Center to get staff, volunteers, patients and visitors in the holiday spirit.

The medical center partners with the American Federation of Musicians, Local 618, Albuquerque Musicians' Association, for the concerts.

The line up is:

★ **Today**, Bill Weisz, piano, noon-1 p.m.

★ **Dec. 8**, Albuquerque Girls' Choir, 4-4:30 p.m.

★ **Dec. 12**, Larry Wheeler, piano, and Bernie Higgons, tenor saxophone, noon-1 p.m.

★ **Dec. 17**, Southwest Edition, accapella quartet, noon-1 p.m.

Call Public Affairs, 265-1711, ext. 2843.

Settlement of estate

Any person or persons having claims for or against the estate of Maj. Steven Plumhoff, assigned to 58th Operations Group, Kirtland AFB, should contact the Summary Court Officer, Maj. Dirk Johnson, 551st Special Operations Squadron, Kirtland AFB, 853-5312, DSN 263-5312, cell 505-301-5437.

Airmen can now review records online

RANDOLPH AFB, Texas—The Air Force has implemented a new program enabling Airmen to complete record reviews online through *virtual* Military Personnel Flight.

Airmen will soon begin receiving e-mail notifications around their birthday each year advising them to review their electronic personnel records maintained in the military personnel data system.

"After the customer logs in to vMPF and accomplishes his or her record review, a hard copy should be printed for the member's personal records," said Master Sgt Don Taylor, superintendent of customer support operations here. "If all of the information is correct, no further action is required until the next annual review."

In some areas where errors may be found, the member can make the needed changes through the links provided. The member should make the corrections as soon as he or she discovers it, said Sergeant Taylor.

Other errors not yet updateable through the *virtual* Record Review can be corrected by the individual's MPF or commander's support staff.



Photo by Todd Berenger

550th Special Operations Squadron changes commanders

Lt. Col. Hans Kaspar takes the 550th Special Operations Squadron's flag and command from Col. Paul Harmon, 58th Operations Group commander, Nov. 26. Former commander, Lt. Col. Dennis Pannell, is now the Air Force Special Operations director of assignments, Hurlburt Field, Fla.

Small business research program manager retires

Bob Hancock, the Air Force Small Business Innovation Research Program manager, has retired after working for the Air Force for more than 30 years.

Hancock managed the the congressionally mandated economic and technology development program since 1985. He began working for the Air Force Research Laboratory in 1976.

Maj. Gen. Paul D. Nielsen, Air Force Research Laboratory commander, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, wrote "In honor of your extensive service to the Air Force, my SBIR program management team has named their annual recognition of the best SBIR manager as 'The Hancock Certificate for the Air Force SBIR Manager of the Year.' You are the first recipient of the award."

The SBIR program is responsible for developing inventions such as night vision goggles and a vibration isolation system for space launch vehicles.

For the last 10 years Hancock has worked for the Air Force under an Intergovernmental Personnel Act agreement with New Mexico Tech.

Hancock and his wife Peggy plan on spending time with their daughter Candice and their grandchildren Stephanie and Michael in Alabama.



Bob Hancock

Laser environmental assessment finished

An environmental assessment was completed recently for a laser program that will produce high-resolution images of space objects.

The Air Force Research Laboratory's Directed Energy Directorate and Trex Enterprises of San Diego, Calif., in an educational partnership agreement with the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, will begin program construction next year.

An environmental impact assessment released for public comment Nov. 24 declared that the program will pose minimal short-term and no long-term impacts to the environmental condition of the area. The possible sites proposed, near White Sands Missile Range, N.M., were evaluated through eleven broad environmental issue categories to determine potential impacts.

The area assessment included two possible sites, one within the Energetic Materials Research and one at White Sands Missile Range.

The assessment included construction and operational impacts of two building structures, the heliostat array, and associated infrastructure such as roads, electrical power, telephone, water, and sewer. In all categories, the results of evaluation listed either no impact or negligible impact.

The program, Geo Light Imaging National Testbed, would enable researchers to image objects such as satellites from the ground with the precision and resolution equivalent to a 100-meter telescope. The testbed will use an array of light-gathering panels, or heliostats, to collect reflected light from objects in space. The light is then projected onto a large, curved panel that channels the information through a detector array of photo-multiplier tubes. These collect the light data and produce the final image.

Program construction is slated to begin in early 2004. Building costs are expected to be around \$10.4 million.

Chief ends 31-year firefighting career

BY JENNIFER E. WEST

Nucleus staff writer

Spoiling his five grandchildren is at the top of the list of things to do when Kirtland AFB Fire Chief Dennis Lovato retires. The chief's retirement is in the new fire station on the west side of the base, Dec. 10, 10:30 a.m.

The 31-year firefighter looks back on his career spent at Kirtland AFB as a time of working with great people.

"You can't compare the Kirtland people," Lovato noted. "There's always someone with a smile."

Lovato, a native of New Mexico, joined the Army in 1970 after graduating from Albuquerque High School. While serving as a military policeman, he was credited with 28 drug-related arrests and identifying and arresting a murder suspect.

His military service took him to Vietnam in 1971 with the 7th Cavalry Division. He was a helicopter door gunner, decorated with the Bronze Star, Air medals and Army Commendation Medal. The expert marksman with an M-60, M-16 and .45 and .38 caliber guns accomplished more than 150 insertions and extractions into "hot landing zones" in Vietnam.

His Bronze Star was awarded for his attempt to rescue a downed helicopter crew in Sombay, Vietnam. His own aircraft and crew received gunfire and crashed, so his mission changed to treating an injured crewmember while defending their position.

In 1973, Lovato received his honorable discharge from the Army and began his career at the Kirtland AFB Fire Department as an entry level trainee firefighter. Following four promotions through the



Photo by Dennis Carlson

Fire Chief Dennis Lovato

years, he took the top job as fire chief in 1996.

Among his many memories of work here are the contributions of his department's employees, helping extinguish the bosque fires that threatened homes in Albuquerque and the fire in Los Alamos a few years ago.

More personal is his recollection of resuscitat-

ing a fellow fireman during his early years as a firefighter, and working with his firefighters to extinguish a wheel fire on an airliner with about 100 passengers at the city airport.

And he is proud that his department was among the first to remedy the problem of acquiring equipment and trucks for Air Force base fire stations. Using the option of leasing, the chief said, he was able to secure equipment that was paid and owned within three years of the innovative approach to solving the problem. The plan worked so well that other bases have inquired how to also use the approach.

Unlike many retiring employees, Lovato isn't planning to travel or go fishing. Although he hopes to indulge in his hobby of furniture-making, his primary goal after a couple of months of extreme leisure and enjoying his family, is to return to educational pursuits. Paralegal study is his first choice, one that may allow him to someday use his knowledge to help other people and veterans. His interest in studying for paralegal work stems from his early dream to work in law enforcement—a firefighter career was not his original plan.

As he bids farewell to TEAM KIRTLAND, he sends his thanks to the 132 people working now in his department and those in his years here for helping him have a meaningful career. And he also sends thanks to the people of Kirtland AFB for their support throughout the years.

"The (fire) department is a family—you get hooked on it," he explained. "(And) I'm going to miss the (TEAM KIRTLAND) people—they're really good people."

Reserve, Guard now have unlimited commissary benefits

DOD announced that effective immediately, the following members and their dependents will be permitted unlimited access to commissary stores:

★ Members of the Ready Reserve, including members of the Selected Reserve, Individual Ready Reserve and Inactive National Guard and members of the Retired Reserve who possess a Uniformed Services Identification Card.

★ Former members eligible for retired pay at age

60 but who have not yet attained that age and who possess a DOD Civilian Identification Card.

★ Dependents of these members who have a Uniformed Services Identification Card or who have a distinct identification card used as an authorization card for benefits and privileges administered by the uniformed services.

Instructions have gone out to U.S. stores informing them that reservists now have unlimited shop-

ping, said Patrick Nixon, deputy director of the Defense Commissary Agency.

Guard and Reserve members were authorized only 24 commissary shopping days a year until the president signed the National Defense Authorization Act, which contained provisions eliminating the restrictions.

Guard and Reserve members no longer have to present a Commissary Privilege Card when they shop.